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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by name and address to ensure publication. Several letters are being held for lack of space, but these will appear in a later issue of the JOURNAL; many are abridged for the same reason.

VOTING BY MAIL

Dear Editor: Voting by mail is only allowable when special provision is made for so voting. One cannot argue that because voting by mail is not prohibited, therefore, it is legal. There are some objections to voting by mail and each organization must decide for itself whether the objections outweigh the advantages or not. The provision which was made for some of those in the service of the United States government to vote by mail, was a temporary expedient resorted to under very unusual conditions. At first thought, it seems only fair to give those members of an organization who are unable to attend a meeting, an opportunity to express their preference on questions that are to be decided, especially in the selection of officers. One of the objections to voting by mail, is that not all of the absent members are reached, and generally only a small proportion of those respond. A greater objection is that when members are not in actual conference, it is impracticable for any individual member to ascertain from any large number, the reasons which have entered into the decision of any question. One whose mind is open to conviction often changes his opinion after hearing the viewpoint of others in the discussion of a question which takes place when members are assembled. These objections are of equal force whether applied to the election of officers by mail or to reaching a decision on a question which can be voted upon by Yes or No. It is true that the merits and demerits of nominees are seldom discussed openly in an assembly, but the informal discussion which invariably takes place among members, tends to a consensus of opinion which is more likely to result in the election of those best fitted for the respective offices than if such interchange of views and opinions does not take place.

Detroit, Mich.

(Mrs.) EMMA A. FOX,

*Author of Parliamentary Usage for
Women's Clubs.*

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE NEW YORK NURSE PRACTICE ACT

Dear Editor: The proposed nurse bill is supposed to satisfy the nurses by protecting their R.N., and the doctors and public by overcoming the shortage of nurses. I have no doubt but that the shortage would be overcome, because many doctors and people would employ these inferior nurses, called Trained Attendants, but would turning out thousands of them every year help protect the registered nurses? This bill raises the fee of the pupil in a registered school who wishes to take the State Examination for R.N. and it compels the R.N. graduate to register every year. Then it provides a short-term training for uneducated girls, and gives them a certificate of approval with a degree from the Regents. It expects these girls to do the easy and ordinary work, leaving the difficult and desperate cases for the R.N.'s. In New York City, some hospitals are already paying them \$25 a month while training, and all these schools ask is that they can read and write. These girls are actually going out and nursing now. Even if they should be kept from using the letters R.N. they will take the work of the R.N. and their pay.

I think that the nurses have not studied this bill, or they would not have raised money to employ a lecturer to go around and favor this bill. If the State of New York would give a conspicuous R.N. pin as Rhode Island does, to be worn only by the R.N.'s, and if the nurses would spend as much money to prosecute the impostors as they have raised to carry this bill, the dignity of the R.N. would not be questioned. The proposed bill admits that the present method is a failure and needs changing. But why is it necessary to give up all we have been so many years in getting? Laws might be made to restrict and license inferior nurses, but not to educate and certify them. This bill should be opposed by the nurses. Make nursing more attractive for pupils and graduates. If the training schools were on an eight-hour day, and the course were cut from three to two years, the supply of good nurses would be sufficient.

Syracuse

ELSIE W. HILLEN, R.N.

(See editorial comment on this subject.—Ed.)

EXPERIENCES OF UNIT NO. 53

Dear Editor: I have been so much interested in reading the experiences of hospital Units that I would like to tell something of the experiences of Unit No. 53, of which I had the honor to be the Chief Nurse. I received my appointment in Chicago, July 1, 1918, and left for Camp Dix, Wrightstown, N. J., July 3rd. I passed the Chief Nurses' examination and received orders to proceed to the Nurses' Mobilization Station, New York, to organize my unit. By August 20, the entire Unit had assembled. We were very busy completing records and without a stenographer's assistance I found this a very strenuous undertaking. Typewriters were at a premium, but since there were no objections to our getting a typewriter I rented two. Fearing that we might be unable to secure the use of a typewriter overseas, my Unit agreed to buy a Corona, which we did, and it was in use constantly. On September 1, we sailed in "The Aquitania," eight thousand troops and Units 66 and 53. The first day we were privileged to see the ship. The second day, very definite rules were given which enlightened us as to our duties and the observance of which assured us of a safer voyage. Each day grew more strenuous, boat drills, siren calls, life savers, sea sickness, mumps, measles, etc., added to our daily duties. Sea sickness did not excuse anyone from boat drills. We reached South Hampton after a seven days' trip, and our Unit was directed to the *Esequibo*, an English hospital ship, to sail for Le Havre. It was well equipped and we were taken care of nicely. We remained in Le Havre one night and then started for Langres, which was located in the valley and with so much rain, acquired the name "Mud Hole." Mud, however, did not interfere with the good work done at this Base Hospital. Nurses wore rubber boots, pinned up their dresses, and plowed through the mud. Duck walks could not be made because the men were too busy putting up tents. A convoy of 900 men came to us the first night we were there. These men were suffering with influenza, pneumonia, and other illnesses. Unit 55 were living in some of our barracks and having had a little rest, undertook the care of this convoy during the night. The greatest difficulty we experienced was in getting clean linen for the patients. Nurses washed sheets and towels and carried all the water. In fact, besides the bedside care, we attended to all the housekeeping and prepared a great deal of the food. The sugar, chocolate, cocoa, etc., that nurses had in their possession they gave to the patients. Any opportunity a nurse had she went to the village and bought for her sick patients the delicacies she knew they would enjoy. The St. Mihiel Drive was on and large convoys kept coming in until both bases at